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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on some speculations arising from a long-term research project which utilizes data from teachers' autobiographies in understanding the nature of teachers' knowledge and development. The work is part of an increasing body of research which uses biographical methods to aid in understanding teachers' lives, careers, cultures, and life worlds. At the beginning of the paper in understanding is used to provide a human and personal example in which a discussion of teacher development may be grounded. Following this, the general characteristics of how teacher development occurs, and under what conditions, are considered as discerned from a study of over 75 teacher autobiographies. Finally, the autobiographical approach is examined for its potential for self-initiated, peer-assisted teacher development. A university course in the construction of autobiographies through dialogue and discussion is described which seemed to demonstrate that, while autobiography is a fundamental form of personal and professional inquiry, it can be done more easily when supported and catalyzed by colleagues. The potential for collaborative autobiography for team building and mutual bonding at the school level is also explored and it is concluded that collaborative authobiography provides a facilitative context for staff development that can be adapted for school-based projects and collaborative action research. (JD)

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SPECULATIONS ON THE NATURE AND FACILITATION OF TEACHER DEVELOPMENT AS DERIVED FROM TEACHERS' STORIES

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Introduction

We are engaged in a long-term research project which utilizes data from teachers' autobiographies in understanding the nature of teachers' knowledge and teacher development (Butt & Raymond, 1987; Butt, Raymond & Ray, 1989; Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988). This work is part of an increasing body of research which uses biographical methods in understanding teachers' lives, careers, cultures, and life worlds. (See for example Butt & Raymond; 1989, Ball & Goodson, 1985; Sikes, 1985; Woods, 1985; Huberman, 1988; Hargreaves, 1986; Pinar, 1988; Raymond & Surprenant, 1988; Krall, 1988). At the beginning of this paper we will use one case study to provide a human and personal example in which to ground our discussion of teacher development. We will then speculate as to the general characteristics of how teacher development occurs and under what conditions, as discerned from over seventy-five teacher autobiographies. We have used an autobiographical approach as one of several research methodologies in our investigations; in the latter part of this paper, however, we wish to examine its potential for self-initiated, peer-assisted, teacher development since the context and conditions of collaborative autobiography seem to match conditions for professional development (Aspinal, 1986, 1988; Woods & Sikes, 1987). Finally, we discuss how collaborative autobiography, as one example of a facilitative context for teacher development, can be adapted for school-based projects and collaborative action research.

Ray's Story

Image, curricular realities and the individual

Ray's experience of his classroom and teaching is strongly characterized by a continuing tension and stress he feels as a result of a number of competing values. To illustrate a point he began to tell a story about a student who he remembered vividly. As a result of telling the story Ray reveals a strong image that rests at the center of his ideals about teaching.

> The concern for content rather than individual specific needs of students troubles me because student performance on any standardized system of evaluation is affected by all the external and internal factors confronting that child at that particular time. Every incident, expression or emotion that the child holds will influence his response at that time. To give an example, several years ago I had a small and very likeable . . . boy in a physical education class. There was a school rule that required students to have appropriate clothing for class, so this boy frequently missed physical education because he left his clothing at home. Finally, the principal and I began to check the home situation. The boy's father was an alcoholic who was frequently violent with the children. As a result of this violence the children would often get off the bus, put their books and supplies in the house and leave to avoid contact with their father. On many occasions the children slept in the car and left for school in the morning without re-entering the house. As a result they were unable to eat breakfast or prepare a lunch for school and were unable to get the school supplies that were needed. The awareness of this situation and many others like this one, led me to the realization for many children, academic achievement was not a high priority and that school was viewed by some children as an escape from the horrors of their world as a haven. I determined that my classroom would be viewed as a haven and that the students would be sympathetically and caringly heard in my classroom. Since then I have always attempted to be friend and counsellor to the students as well as their teacher. Out of this has grown an interest in giving the students encouragement to develop a sense of personal identity and a strong sense of self-worth. Frequently now my priority is to try to recognize the personal needs of students. I think that students are capable of learning the prescribed curriculum in short order when this happens the students feel good about themselves. When they are comfortable and satisfied with their environment, then they will learn those seemingly insignificant things that make up the current curriculum (D. A. pp. 33-4).

The image of haven, then, is what Ray strives for in his day-to-day classroom life. Ray experiences, however, a troubling struggle in reconciling what he considers the pressure to cover the content of an inadequate mandated curriculum as compared to what individual students really need to know, and what might be relevant to their own life situations. His deep commitment to the individual heightens this tension. At one time Ray's pursuit of relevance and individual student concerns had provided the energy for him to evolve a completely individualized approach for junior high school social studies which he pursued for six years. The advent of Objectives Based Education in his school district made his curriculum "obsolete". As well, the re-introduction of external tests of student achievement also squeezed out the possibility of more flexible and individualized approaches. The emphasis became:

> . . . molding students to suit prescribed curriculum rather than my own perceived goal of molding program to suit persons . . . .

> This conflict between the measurement of student achievement on prescribed external curricula and my awareness and desire to deal with the social and emotional problems of eleven to sixteen year old students causes me a great deal of anxiety, because I am confronted with the question of how what I do, relates to the curriculum as evidenced by performance on tests and other assessment techniques (D. A. p. 1). . . .
>
> Provincial examinations are a final factor. First there is the question of what is tested. It better be taught. The provincial exams at present are also used to evaluate the success rate of teachers in schools and districts. Results are sent out, and concerns of teacher competence are raised as a result of things like test results (D. B. p. 9).

Ray's ideal image of the classroom as a haven where pupils are sheltered from any realities of life that too harshly prevent them from personal learning and growth understandably generates a notion that young people should be able to become responsible for their own actions. They need, therefore, to be given the opportunity to do so. In reality, junior high school students respond in varying degrees of maturity to such opportunities and Ray finds himself forced to exercise the type of external discipline that he abhors and that is not at all congruent with the notion of haven.

> As a student I was forced to sit quietly, never turning to satisfy the requirements of the teacher. My attitude is that this is unnatural. As a result there is conversation and movement in my room. This also raises concerns for me as I wonder if I should permit this to happen or force students to sit quietly.
>
> This leads directly to a third dilemma that I face. I think that students should be responsible for their actions but it seems to me that some will not assume that responsibility, so then I think I must. This creates a conflict whereby I am confronted by the dual roles of being in charge and letting the students assume the responsibility for their own actions (D. A. pp. 1-2).
>
> Self-discipline is a more desirable goal in my classroom, and as students respond to me and to each other it produces a freeing atmosphere that promotes trust and openness. That is the kind of classroom climate I desire and for which I strive. However, often it seems that I must correct inappropriate behavior because it shows a lack of respect for others, but this shows a lack of respect for the individual, and may limit the ability of the individual to accept the self-discipline of personal control. The balance between self-control and external-control is difficult to achieve, partly because of the extreme emotional fluctuations that children of this age experience frequently (D. A. pp. 4-5).

Pedagogical Patterns: Personal, Practical, Prescriptive and Contextual Influences

Ray teaches Grade 9 classes a compulsory social studies course. Students range from regular to very low ability with grade level reading equivalents ranging from three to twelve. He

teachers two Grade 9 optional subjects; one in geography and the other in Canadian history. He is familiar with many of these students since they are drawn from his compulsory classes. These classes, Ray notes, are not really optional classes for many pupils. There is a limited number of options and many of the students would prefer not to be in the class but are there because other more popular options were filled. These Grade 9 classes, both compulsory and optional, are characterized, then, by a wide diversity of ability and pupil dispositions. Ray also teaches a Grade 8 compulsory social studies class consisting of mainly honors students. Of two students Ray described as "difficult", one is of lower ability, and the other does not make the necessary effort to learn.

It is possible, from Ray's description of his classes, to identify some common factors which, to varying degrees, shape his and many other teachers' curriculum and pedagogy. These factors are not meant to be interpreted as being mutually exclusive; they interact in complex ways. Some of these interactions are mutually enhancing and others are mutually constraining. These factors and influences can be construed as being primarily related to the nature of the curriculum, the nature of the learns, and the nature of the teacher. Whether there is mandated curriculum or not is a powerful influence on the classrooms' curriculum-in-use and related pedagogy. The specific nature of the subject matter, whether prescribed or teacher determined, also influences pedagogy. With regard to factors related to students, major influences include ability level, diversity of ability levels, degree of intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, and self-control of students. As well, the unique nature of junior high school students, in terms of their early adolescent dispositions, is an important factor. Consideration of students' interests and lived-realities also contributes to a determination of what might be relevant. Degree of pupil choice with respect to course selection also interrelates with these factors. The above influences are mediated, of course, by the teacher <u>as person</u>. The teacher is the final arbitrator in determining what finally emerges from these multiple influences in various situations and with various actors. Ray's ideal image of haven, its translation into elaborating curriculum to take account of student lives and personal development as a necessary pre-condition for academic

development, and its manifestation into humanistic classroom climate, activities, and management strategies are of vital personal importance. The key issue here becomes the degree to which the curriculum is adequate, in and of itself, and the degree to which prescription, external testing, and specific subject matter is perceived to allow for flexible adaptation, in terms of both content and pedagogy, to meet pupils' needs and interests as well as Ray's style and beliefs. These common factors interact to produce different pedagogical and curriculum outcomes in Ray's classes. Ray's Grade 9 compulsory social studies classes involve a mandated curriculum that he feels is seriously inadequate which is externally tested. His pupils exhibit typical ebullient junior high school behavior. They are from regular to very low ability levels and very diverse in other respects as well. They did not choose to be in this course and are perceived by Ray to be largely unmotivated. They appear to be unable to work co-operatively in groups larger than two. The class includes several disinterested students who disrupt the class. When Ray's ideal image and preferred teaching style, together with his need for motivation, control, and orderly discipline are brought to bear on this cluster of characteristics, his pedagogical resolution clearly favors control and a concern for coverage of curriculum content which will be tested. Ray's pedagogy, then, for this class, is basically traditional direct teaching, including lecturing, note-taking, individual exercises, reading, and answering questions from the text.

Within this framework Ray is only able to pursue his ideal image of the classroom in two ways. Through occasional personal contacts during seatwork periods, he is able to engage in problem resolution, and discuss home and family concerns that might affect students' work. He also tries to make curriculum and pedagogy relevant to real life problems and pupil interests, whenever possible.

Ray's sacrifice of his preferred image and teaching style to content and control in is compulsory Grade 9 class contrasts significantly with his Grade 9 Geography option. Ray evolved this course himself and has received the approval necessary to teach it. There is no external text for his course. The students in this class have many of the same characteristics as in the Grade 9 compulsory course except that a significant number of them may have freely chosen to pursue

geography. Nonetheless, some students are in the class because other preferred options had been filled. Ray's pedagogy in this class is distinctly different from the compulsory course in social studies. It cannot be described as traditional or conventional.

> The options I teach are open and I develop the curriculum completely based on my perception of how the students can most readily learn those things I think they should know from the course. This freedom to develop allows me to do things in more unorthodox ways. Students build tests, they develop information sheets, they teach classes, they make and play games, and they build and demonstrate models. They participate more directly in the curriculum building process (D. B. p. 8).

Despite the nature of the subject matter, which requires the acquisition of some skills through repetition, frequent review sheets and quizzes, the main flavour of the classroom emphasizes exciting and enjoyable pupil-centered concrete activities. Pupils develop models and games and students work together on projects which they teach to the class. Other students create their own maps and charts. Ray is able to utilize a pedagogy which is more experiential and personal in this class. The major factors that appear to determine this pattern are the absence of external prescription and testing plus the fact that Ray is able to create a curriculum using subject matter and pedagogy that embodies his preferred style.

Ray's other two preparations, Grade 9 Canadian history (option) and Grade 8 social studies (compulsory), have their distinct pedagogical characteristics. We will not examine them in depth here but it is important to note that even though the Grade 8 course is compulsory and the curriculum is prescribed, Ray's pedagogy is more open, like the Grade 9 geography, reflecting his personal image to a significant degree. He attributes this to one overriding factor--the students, generally, are academically excellent, very responsible, and almost totally self-motivated and enthusiastic about learning. This class contrasts with the Grade 9 history optional course where the dry nature of the subject matter and relatively less motivated students shape a less open pedagogy.

Image: Ghosts of Realities Past

The foregoing portion of Ray's story, as with most educational studies, seeks to portray understanding through an examination of the present. If we dwell here, however, only in the present, we rob ourselves of an understanding, derived from the past, which is surprising in its richness. Ray describes clearly the link between his past and his image of haven.

> As a small child I was nervous and uncomfortable. My brother was one year older and noticeably stronger so I frequently took the brunt of his anger. I had no father to speak of, having seen him only infrequently until I was six and then never seeing him again. He was an alcoholic and it seemed to me that he only appeared to generate more stress in an already stress-filled home. My mother, in contrast, was a struggling, determined person. She was a school teacher at a time when it was not well regarded. While she struggled to raise two growing boys she had little community support. We had few friends so we depended on each other. That was significant to me, as was the fact that she was a teacher. She taught me for two years and they were not good years. She didn't want anyone suggesting that she favoured me, so she was more stern with me than the other students. She had us write our names on the board if we were bad and for one entire year I never missed a single day.
>
> We moved before I began junior high school and my most dominant memories were of stern, very firm, inflexible teachers. These same types of teachers continued to be my lot through even senior high school. Many times in school I was embarrassed intentionally by teachers. On one occasion all the boys in class were strapped for something a student had done. On another occasion, shortly after I had moved to a new school, the Superintendent came in and everyone immediately rose to greet him. I had never seen this before so I didn't, but I was severely reprimanded after for not standing. These events had a significant impact on me. I was determined that people should never be treated in such a manner. I began to develop a strong sense of compassion for others who seemed to have difficulty and this carried over into all avenues of my development, even into my classroom (D. C. pp. 3-4).

From Ray's autobiography we see how the notion of haven for his students is rooted in his own personal experience. His own life history enables him to empathize and identify with his students in his own need for security and a haven.

> I began to formalize my style more after moving to Hamley. I had never before taught more than two years in one place, so there were few ties established, but in Hamley I felt I wanted roots. Staying and working for a longer time helped me to develop my own style. I worked on self-awareness and self-esteem for myself and others. As I saw the positive effects it had I worked more at it, sharing it with students, suggesting they read different books (D. C. pp. 4-5).

This phenomenon of an important element of a teacher's personal practical knowledge, rooted in personal experience, providing a mutual concern with and for students, occurred with

other teachers whose autobiographies we have interpreted. Glenda's experience with personal liberation and self-determination is embedded within the pedagogy she and her immigrant and refugee students jointly evolve. Lloyd's search for personal security, safety, and success helps him identify with his low socio-economic students and assist them in the type of social and academic development needed for their own upward mobility (Butt and Raymond, 1986). Glenda and Lloyd are more easily able, however, to manifest their personal teaching ideals and styles within their teaching situations than Ray.

The Nature of Teacher Development

Terms

At this point we should clarify the terms we will use in describing our initial findings related to teacher development. The particular way in which various experiences in a teacher's life affect teacher development will be called influences. Influence refers to the nature of the way in which a particular person or event shapes teacher development and knowledge. The particular person, relationship, event will be called the source of the influence. Both influences and sources clearly have a substantive element but they also subsume an interactive process between person and context; experience is a process as well as being substantive in character. Processes of teacher development refer specifically, however, to person-context interactions, the dynamics of experience, even though they, in turn, subsume the substantive elements mentioned above. The term the nature of teacher development will refer to influences, sources of influences, and processes, and all other aspects of teacher development. Influences on teacher development, that is the specific way in which particular sources shape teachers' thoughts and actions are more person-specific, and, as yet we have not interpreted enough data to see if any commonalities exist.

Common Categories of Sources of Influence on Teacher Development

Our collection of more than 60 teacher autobiographies, regardless of subject, age level or other contextual factors, support what we see in Ray's story and those of other teachers we have studied in depth (Butt & Raymond, 1989; Raymond & Butt, Forthcoming). There are several

things we can say about most, or all, teachers, with respect of sources of influences, and there are other things we can say that are potentially important in many teachers' development in varying degrees. Firstly, the overall process of teacher development and nature of the knowledge that results, and is applied in the classroom, is rooted mostly in individual experience. This characterizes teacher development as personal, unique, and since it takes place over a lifetime, autobiographical in nature. As well, since there are commonalities across the varied contexts in which teachers work, some aspects of teacher development and the knowledge that results, are common: collective forms of development and teachers' knowledge can exist. The two most predominant categories of sources of influences that shape teacher development appear, as we see with Ray and others, to be the teacher's private life history and professional experience of teaching. The degree to which a teacher's private life history feeds into their dispositions as a teacher is clearly very powerful. The teachers' experience of formal schooling is a third category of sources of influence on teacher development.

Within these three categories there are multiple potential sources of influence that form a general pattern across teachers' unique developmental pathways. Potential sources of influence in private life that teachers bring to their career of teaching include personal relationships with parents, relatives, spouses, friends, mentors, and various significant others. Background factors such as a nature of the family, home, ethnicity, religion, and location, may be important. Childhood, adolescence, young adulthood, and other adult phases of development, can bring forth an understanding of teacher dispositions. Within and between these various phases a teacher's personal development might be illuminated by an understanding of the very powerful influences of passages, crises, significant events, discontinuities, changes, major successes, and failures.

Within a teacher's career, particular contexts, schools, school staffs, communities, co-workers, and subject matters, all offer potential sources of influence on teacher development. A particularly difficult or outstanding class--a favourite or least favourite subject--might cause particular changes in a teacher's approach to teaching; these changes may not always be desired! (Butt, Raymond & Ray, Forthcoming). Especially outstanding professional successes,

breakthroughs and failures are all moments that can influence many teachers' development in significant ways. Particular projects, groups of peers, special supervisors, and mentors, all permeate many teachers' autobiographies fairly strongly as being influential in their development. The most pervasive finding that we have noted to date though, is the phenomenon of intercollegial relationships which are mentioned in some way in almost all teachers' stories, whether positively or negatively, as related to peers or superiors (Butt, Paul & Smith, 1988). Related to this we found many teachers speaking in very positive terms about small groups of colleagues who might exchange and share ideas and help one another, in all sorts of ways, to provide support and encouragement. They also wrote or talked about the influence of special action-oriented projects within which they found collegial support for their own development. Interactions with the occasional collegial or superordinate mentor or very cohesive and open school staff also took the same tone. Many negative images of intercollegial relations are also mentioned. These were seen as clearly impeding the teacher's work and development in a variety of ways. (See Raymond & Surprenant, 1988; Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988; Butt, Paul & Smith, 1988).

Teachers' school experiences represent, as we know, a socializing apprenticeship of many years, which probably for most teachers, makes evolving out of conventional pedagogical relationships very difficult (Zeichner & Grant, 1981; Crow, 1987; Knowles, 1988). What teachers are conscious of in many cases within their own schooling, however, are the personal characteristic, pedagogical styles, and relationships with their least and most favourite teachers. Past teachers, least and most favourite subjects and levels of success appear to influence many teachers' educational choices throughout school and in higher education. As well, many teachers still carry images of past teachers with them (positive and negative) to influence how they develop and teach many years later. Teachers also write often about how school experiences and persons were relevant (or not) to their life world as youngsters, to the real world, and home. How school affirmed or disaffirmed the student and the degree of continuity or discontinuity between school, self, and life, appears to provide important images that relate to how some teachers teach (See Butt,

Forthcoming). We are not saying here that all of these sources are significant influences in teachers' development, and to the same degree, but we can predict, from teachers' autobiographies, that many of them will be important influences for most teachers. For example Ray's story highlights the dynamics of his family members and background, his experience of schooling, positive career contexts that encourage him to develop his own approaches and implement his preferred image, and negative career contexts that hinder his development. In contrast to the eighty to ninety percent of his colleagues who identify intercollegial relations as a significant theme, he does not mention it at all. Bearing in mind his background and the nature of schools perhaps he is really isolated. He did, as well, express feelings of extreme alienation especially from his superordinates.

Gross Processes in Teacher Development

It appears that the existential dispositions and socialization that evolve from a teacher's private life during the formative years prior to teaching and from a teacher's own experience as a learner, provide the grounds which influence the way a teacher begins to teach. These grounds, however, are then subjected to the test of what works within various professional contexts over time to be affirmed, disaffirmed, or reshaped in various conscious or unconscious ways. Parallel to this are the interactive effects of significant events in adult development which teachers might bring into their development in teaching.

Within these gross processes more specific processes seem to occur which carry the uniqueness of the individual teacher's life. Our definition of terms earlier in this paper with respect to source and influence reflect the fact that, whereas the substance and processes within a telling event in a person might significantly influence a teacher's development and knowledge, the source and the nature of the influence have to be considered separately in order to discern how the influence might be similar or different from the source. Differences might accrue due to both the mediations of personal life history since the event and the nature of the context within which the influence is active.

Speculations on Person-Context Interaction

Type, Variety, and Sequence

Experiences that contribute to teacher development appear to come from a series of interactions of the person with a matrix of situations embedded within a variety of contexts. The biographical dispositions of the person that are brought to each interaction, and that influence outcomes, can be viewed as a mix of both the unexamined, habitual, or shaped self, and the conscious, intentional, and existential self. Each person-context interaction probably can produce both existential and unconscious outcomes.

We have described elsewhere (Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988) a way of looking at the various types of contexts that appear to be influential in shaping teachers' development in both private and professional life. The interpersonal sees the self interacting with the self through reflection as a significant context. The interpersonal context through personal relationships and intercollegial interaction has appeared to be very powerful in shaping or misshaping teachers' lives, as have various ethnic and/or organizational cultural contexts. The practical context of the classroom and the school impinges on teachers' thoughts and actions in very immediate and compelling ways, as do some requirements of such contexts as the profession of teaching, the institutional and societal imperatives related to mandated curricula and external exams.

Teacher development, then, can be seen at any given point, as an accumulated amalgam and, to varying degrees, a reconstruction of experience, gained from a series of person-context interactions from the past and continuing present. A teacher's knowledge and development will depend on the specific type, variety, and particular sequence of person-context interactions that have occurred. If we imagine the possible combinations of type, variety sequence of contexts with the variability of existential response, and add the potential interactions that might occur between private, educational, and professional life streams, we can see how varied and unique personal life histories can be. We can also understand how the various commonalities across individuals identified in this paper manifest themselves within teachers' lives in widely varying unique ways.

Expression, Affirmation, and Growth

A major issue in understanding teacher development is whether context-person interactions affirm, constructively challenge, or disaffirm the personal craft knowledge of the teacher. Here we are talking of the degree to which there is a match or mismatch between personal and context. We chose to conceptualize these particular types of person-context interactions as synergistic or congruent, dialectic, and problematic (Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988). We hypothesize that teachers who perceive themselves as competent, who have a large measure of teaching satisfaction, and who are self-initiated in professional development, have a high degree of synergistic or congruent interaction with their particular contexts. We notice with Glenda (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1986) that in her context of teaching ESL students, most of whom are refugees, she uses a person-centered thematic approach. This has a high degree of congruence with her own needs, intentions, and personal image of self determination. Lloyd, as well, is able to bind himself, through his personal image of family, his notions of safety, survival, and success, to his lower socio-economic pupils. Ray, in his optional classes and in his high ability class is able to implement his image of haven and preferred pedagogical style. These type of context-person matches appear to affirm the teacher, as well as the students.

We think that dialectic aspects of person-context interactions, whereby there is some tension between the craft knowledge of the teacher and what is required by the context, can stimulate and help create further growth. Glenda's feeling of "incompetence," for example when she began teaching ESL led to very deliberate actions on her part to develop the attitudes, skills, and knowledge she needed to enable the refugee children to evolve self-determination.

Problematic aspects of person-context interaction which may disaffirm a teacher's craft knowledge, and frustrate the teacher, occur when teachers find it difficult to teach how they wish to teach, or find it impossible to express their own personal image of teaching. This is exemplified by Ray (Butt, Raymond & Ray, Forthcoming) who, in most of his classes, finds it problematic to implement his image of providing a haven for personal development for his students as a platform from which to address the academic curriculum through a pupil-centered approach to teaching.

The recentralization of curriculum, an increase in external testing, and compulsory courses to which his students are not necessarily committed, combine to thwart his efforts. He is, he feels, forced to revert to traditional teacher-centered pedagogy, curriculum coverage, and harsher classroom management techniques.

We can see, then, the sorts of interactions between personal and context that influence the degree to which the craft knowledge a teacher holds--the way she prefers to think and act in the classroom--can be actually expressed in the classroom and how the relationship between knowledge held and expressed can influence teacher affirmation, disaffirmation, and development.

Self Development, Choice, and Creation of Context

One can speculate that the ideal self-initiated teacher would be able to change the culture of context from within and also evolve or adapt her own knowledge so as to be able to create the synergistic and mutually affirming bridge between teacher and pupils. In counterpoint to this, however, one can say that there are types of learners and teaching contexts that perhaps are so difficult to engage for a particular teacher that would be cause for a transfer. As well, it could be argued from a social relations perspective, that many educational contexts are so externally structured and constrained that it is extremely difficult to change the context. Many scholars of educational innovation and change would argue this point. Perhaps this way of viewing teachers' work shows us a new way of understanding teacher development, teacher efficacy, and indeed the development of student and teacher self-concepts. What is also clear is that the notion of outstanding teachers, and teacher competence become problematic; perhaps it is as much a matter of teacher-context match as anything else? (See Butt, Raymond & Ray, Forthcoming).

Perhaps teacher development, then, could be helped by providing working contexts that, while mostly being matched to a teacher's craft knowledge and images of teaching, also provide some dialectic tension as a challenge for development. If we can minimize problematic elements as well as provide flexibility to allow the teacher to create a context mutually suited to both self and

students, then we might be close to an optimal environment for seeing the best of the teacher, the students and their development.

Contextual and Existential Commonalities in Episodes of Teacher Development

The Individual Context

In trying to draw implications from our studies of teacher stories for teacher development, we need to discern commonalities in episodes of teacher development. In our teachers' stories, episodes of development are personal and experiential. They also occur in such a way as to make teacher take a personal responsibility for development. The nature of these common experiences seem to force or encourage self-initiation. In order to penetrate the way we habitually live, then, those experiences all have strong emotional character--shock of crisis or success, or the reality of a new classroom context that requires personal "adjustment." The events cause discrepancy and discontinuity for which we have few patterned thoughts or habitual actions, or for which we see the inadequacy of our existing ways. We are, then, required to respond as persons, required to enter a cycle of reflection and experiment to build new craft knowledge. We are required to act deliberately and think on these occasions. This process, perhaps, is one of surfacing what was previously unconscious, challenging what was habitual--a process of conscientization.

The Collective Context

Whereas these speculations address individual persons, experiential, and intentional aspects of teacher development contexts, they do not address the strong social elements of events related to teacher development. But there might be a link. We could argue that the collaborative projects, the peer group, and the mentor relationships that clearly enable teachers to grow, encourage the same phenomena with regard to the requirement to reflect and think as crucial individual experiences, but for different reasons. Interacting with peers, planning action, action, reflecting-on-experience, all require making the implicit explicit to serve cognitive, communicative, and emotional functions. What social contexts add over individual experiences is the synergistic effect of a group with a common problem, being in the same (experiential) boat, a

common purpose. What the groups also add, even if they sometimes deal with conflict, is positive interpersonal support and mutual affirmation (Huberman, 1985) as they pursue common goals. In the sense of power-relations and ownership, the groups are collegial--participants are co-learners and co-teachers. The affective dimension appears to be very powerful. The social context of a group of colleagues working on a common project simultaneously challenges the individual teacher while providing the mutual support and encouragement (Butt, Forthcoming). It provides, perhaps, as Wideen (1989) notes, a sheltered environment for taking risks.

This presents only the positive views of teacher development. Many teachers report significant negative interactions that related to their peers and superordinates that impede their development. These interactions and contexts have conditions that are the mirror images of those described earlier: they are too problematic. There are not just intermittent crises and problems that the teacher can solve, learn and grow from, but a constant stream that forces teachers into the survival mode. Given these conditions and lack of support from peers and superordinates, teachers withdraw from the interpersonal contact (Butt, Paul & Smith, 1988). If we add to this type of context the recentralization of curriculum, external testing, and constant add-on's to the teacher work--intensification as Apple (1989) calls it--the teacher becomes disaffirmed, inauthentic, alienated, and regresses (Butt, Raymond & Ray, Forthcoming).

Collaborative Autobiography as a Context for Teacher Development

Reflection as Praxis

We might draw many varied implication for facilitating professional development from teachers' stories ranging from contextual induction, person-context matching, school-based projects, collegial teams, to fundamental changes in the very nature of in-service and professional development experiences planned for teachers. Here, however, we wish to focus solely on the appropriateness of collaborative autobiography as a means of facilitating teacher development as judged by the criteria inherent in teachers' stories.

We assume it is desirable to be self-initiated in professional development. In order to know what we wish to do next, however, we need to know ourselves, who we are, and how we came to be that way. Most of us have not surfaced this knowledge. For this reason alone, we would argue that, for teachers, or others for that matter, autobiography is a fundamental form of personal and professional inquiry--basic research that is necessary in order to know what to focus on and how, for each teacher's development.

We have been enabling teachers to construct personal and professional autobiographies through our graduate course in curriculum studies. We work through four phases of activity and writing: a depiction of the context of their current working reality, a description of their current pedagogy and curriculum-in-use, reflections on their past personal and professional lives insofar as they might relate to an understanding of present professional thoughts and actions and, finally, a projection into their preferred professional futures as related to a personal critical appraisal of the previous three accounts.

The course is described in detail elsewhere (Butt, 1989) but the following brief synopsis will characterize its main elements. Each member of the group (including the instructor) presents excerpts of exploratory writing on each assignment. The rest of the group ask questions, share points of similarity and difference in experience, in order, through dialogue and discussion, to gain deeper understanding of each presenter, to assist each presented to clarify their own understandings, and, as importantly, to catalyze each member of the group in their efforts to address each assignment. To facilitate a high quality of personal reflection, sharing and collaboration, a number of conditions are essential to the process of the course. They include making "I" statements, accurately identifying and describing feelings, being frank and honest, engaging in non-critical acceptance of others, and providing confidentiality. Participants are reminded that they have complete control over the level of disclosure they decide to manifest about personal and professional aspects of their lives. There are a number of different situations within which different levels of disclosure are possible. They include the public discussion in class, private conversations with a friend or friends in the class, discussion with the instructor, the

written biography and, of course, what one discloses only to oneself. The experience of the course, then, can manifest itself at multiple levels. The final written autobiographies evolve from this process, and some written dialogue with the instructor of the course as well as through some readings which pertain to biography and classroom reality, assigned after exploratory work has been completed. The autobiographies, then, are individual and personal; they evolve as well from a collective and collaborative process.

Autobiography is personal and experiential in itself; it encourages reflection-on-experience, and a responsibility for one's own story. It is action and practice-oriented. By reproducing moments crucial to teacher development we can relive discontinuities and discrepancies and give them conscious meaning to explicitly guide future actions. But being self-initiated requires support; writing one's autobiography can be done more easily when supported and catalyzed by colleagues who live in the same place. The course in collaborative autobiography provides that context--where we all are teachers and learners, where we all risk ourselves together, build a mutual trust, create an accepting and affirming environment. Since the class context is created by the participants there usually is a healthy person-context match, our similarities affirm, our differences offer a dialectic, and we work on our concerns. We can be mentors for each other, in turn, as we tell excerpts from our stories and discuss them. In fact, if we compare this process of collaborative autobiography to the common conditions for teacher development noted from teachers' stories, they are very well matched. We conclude, then, that collaborative autobiography, besides being a useful means for research into teacher development, is also a potentially powerful means for assisting teacher development. It provides an intrapersonal challenge within an interpersonal context that provides the support, and a sheltered environment for taking risks.

Systems of Professional Development Revisited

The understanding we have gleaned from teachers as to the nature of their development, together with the potential of collaborative autobiography in facilitating teacher development, both raise important questions about existing means of staff development and school improvement.

These new understandings may help use see existing improvement efforts in a new light--both their critical failings and potential for success.

We have critiqued existing systems and approaches to school improvement elsewhere (Butt, Raymond, McCue & Yamagishi, 1986). Most conventional curriculum innovation and implementation efforts, for the most part, use a vertical approach to change whereby, outsiders, who see themselves as experts, attempt to fix the deficits of insiders. Many professional development and in-service efforts are seen in a similar light by teachers but, more particularly, as inappropriate to their needs, and, indeed, as "artificial insemination" (Flanders, 1983). As to using conventional university-based courses for professional development, in large measure the nature of the knowledge dealt with in many of these courses is, again, prescriptive in nature, and the pedagogic relationship is very often lecture-oriented and still "top-down" in flavour (Butt, 1989). In teachers' stories, seldom do they mention courses as being related to their work lives and professional improvement. Other external forms of stimuli, thought to [illegible]ment, such as school evaluations and other forms of accountability, appear to ev[illegible] lit[illegible] of lasting change; rather they evoke resentment, retrenchment, and resistance [illegible]t these approaches do not reflect the conditions, interactions, relationship[illegible]cher development discerned from teachers' autobiographies.

One glimmer of hope we have seen with respect to innov[illegible] the phenomenon of mutualism (Rand, 1978) which clearly involv[illegible]nship between reformers (outsiders) and teachers which respects the experti[illegible] group has (Butt, Olson & Daignault, 1983; Butt, 1985). Newer approaches to improvement which reflect this relationship, offer much potential. Such projects would ideally be school based, and would clearly involve teachers in determining what is done and how, through collaborative action-research and developmental efforts such as mentorship, induction, and peer-supervision projects.

As compared to other approaches, these more school-based endeavors begin to engage the major criticisms of school improvement efforts; they also begin to match the conditions that appear to be required for teacher development reflected in teachers' autobiographies. Firstly, they move

away from the notion that there is some sort of generalizable solution that can be prescribed for all school, contexts, teachers, and situations. Secondly, the include a collegial relationship amongst all stakeholder groups. Thirdly, they begin to respect the professional development needs of teachers as adult learners. Fourthly, in their relational structures they begin to provide for participation, ownership, and hence, improvement, and fifthly, they begin to respect teachers' realities, expertise, and the nature of the craft knowledge that teachers possess.

Collaborative Autobiography in Action: Towards an Integrated Approach for Teacher Development

Even within these new approaches, that provide for mutualism where teachers can get their agendas on the table, we have not yet got to the key part of the puzzle for teacher development that might integrate with the collective concern of staff development. Teachers need the opportunity to develop the skills of carefully figuring out their own professional development agendas so that they can take a fully considered part in school development efforts. This is where some form of autobiographical work needs to be engaged. As well, they need to exchange stories with their fellow staff members in order to develop a mutual understanding, appreciation, affirmation, and identify collective projects for the future. This type of team building and mutual bonding at the school level, through collaborative autobiography, offers much potential for school-based curriculum development.

The foregoing arguments, while perhaps pursuasive, have been made, even if from the perspective of the "individual teacher," from a conceptual perspective. The real teacher might say, "that is all very well, but when am I going to find time to do all of this"? We empathize with that fact. The intensification of teaching (Apple, 1989) has resulted in role and work overload for teachers compounded by lack of support within the isolated nature of the current pattern of professional life. Surviving classroom reality and being seen to be competent under current conditions of accountability is arduous enough without the added imperative of taking a personal role in continued personal/professional development, classroom change, and educational

improvement. This is especially true if one has to deal, in an isolated fashion, with other peoples' agendas for change that may or may not be congruent with one's own. However, school-based projects which use collaborative autobiography as one element of their activity integrate most of these needs in a way that becomes economic of time and worth the investment, particularly if focused on the personal, in-class, in-school needs, concerns, and realities of teachers. If a school staff works to solve its own problems, it's worth the energy to make classroom life better, to learn together, to experience the collegial support and break down the isolation. Collaborative autobiography when integrated with school improvement has the added advantage of emphasizing and amplifying the unique personal professional needs of each teacher and classroom-based issues. Individual teachers, as Huberman's (1989) work has shown, can be at quite varying points in a broad array of potential career profiles, with different strengths and concerns. Within the process of collaborative autobiography these dispositions can be expressed, identified, and addressed. Individuals with complementary profiles might be able to work together. The degree to which collaborative autobiography provides for intensive reflection on context, makes thoughts and actions and their sources explicit, and allows for critical appraisal and the enunciation of future plans for the individual teacher, is important. This individual empowerment and conscientization is probably basic to self-initiated professional development and a useful pre-requisite to school-based work. In contrast, the collective endeavour and peer collaboration provides a desirable context for individual work. It breaks down the isolation teachers feel, provides support for the individual, and generates energy and renewed commitment to teaching (Ditisheim, 1984).

The ultimate contribution of collaborative autobiography, besides documenting the present and past, is to project individuals and the group into professional futures that are personally and collectively authentic. Through a critical and reflective appraisal of self and through exposure, comparison, and contrast with others, individual strengths, trends, and growth points may be identified. These can be projected forward with a view to overcoming discontinuities, weaknesses, problems, and concerns. In this way, the cycle of a theoretical ghettoization of

teachers through non-reflective practice is broken and given direction by individual and collective future-focused role-images.

At this point we need to express that not all individual teachers roads to professional development pass through the context of the school--everything is not best done through the school--some teachers isolated subject specializations make it difficult. Our point is that the school, being the basic functional unit of the educational system, should be one major focus that provides a focused community base for a network of other efforts. There are other functional professional development groups such as subject departments, persons at particular career stages within and across schools, and other groups. As well, Huberman's (1989) and our work shows there is a strong individual element in teacher development. This should also be supported with networks of opportunities and resources (pp. 13-14) that go beyond the school and functional groups. As Glenda says:

> Professional development is an all-encompassing term to me which might include the discussion of students' progress with the classroom teacher, acting as an advisor on a school newspaper, serving on a district committee, presenting a workshop, reading a professional journal, attending a conference, taking a university course, or reflecting on a particular student. All of these and hundreds of other activities that cause me to think and talk about education and kids I consider to be professional development. I see professional development as a very personal process where I determine areas where I want to increase my understanding and abilities.

This sounds very much like Jackson's (1989) fourth way, although we see the third way, including autobiography, as subsuming the fourth way! Regardless of the combinations of support opportunities, however, collaborative autobiography provides the base from which to move in multiple directions; it provides the context of challenge and support for becoming self-initiated and taking risks.

Individual teachers can use personal knowledge of their own positions and prospective futures to make sense of, interpret, participate in, and personalize school-based projects, prescribed curricula, innovations, and other reforms that emanate from outside their classrooms. Having a clear and coherent picture of one's teaching self, derived through autobiographical study, provides explicit criteria by which a teacher can make judgments about what professional

development opportunities in which to engage or create. What might, in the past, have been a patchwork quilt or mish-mash of conference sessions, in-service workshops, clinics, visits, and university courses with little unity and direction, can become a coherent and highly personal curriculum for continued professional development. If the elements and experiences of this curriculum are carefully selected or created, (individually and/or collectively) the chances of significant personal education characterized by continuity, wholeness, interaction, and experience (Dewey, 1963) will be high. As well, if teachers can engage in peer supervision activities within the school system following a period of collaborative autobiographical inquiry, they can be clear themselves, and make it clear to their peer supervisor, what intentions they wish to pursue and the context within which those interests reside.

If we bring collaborative autobiography or some similarly personal and collective process into the centre of our efforts at curriculum implementation, professional development and supervision, we will not only benefit from the process itself, but from the integrative and synergistic sense it will make of our existing systems of school improvement. We suspect that the small measures of progress we sometimes see with curriculum implementation, innovation, professional development and supervision efforts, will be brought together and perhaps magnified somewhat by an integrative approach to school improvement that makes teacher development its major focus.

A School-Based Project

In order to explore the potential of using collaborative autobiography as a basis for school-based projects we introduced the notion to Yellowhead School District (Edson, Alberta) administrators through a three-day seminar which used a life history approach to help them describe and understand their administrative styles and working contexts as well as to project themselves into administrative roles for school-based staff development. As a result of this seminar we were asked to introduce the notion to teachers through one-day "awareness" workshops which illustrated the life history approach. Teachers were then invited to volunteer for

a one-day "readiness"session provided they could form a "functional" group of teachers, including one administrator from their school. From over two hundred educators approximately forty teachers and administrators in six functional groups participated in the readiness session which was held at a most difficult time--the end of the school year. One of these groups consists of the school board central office staff who were to animate the project in any way they could. Groups were then invited to sign up for a long term school-based collaborative professional development project.

Six groups of teachers and administrators then gave up two or three days of their own time to attend a life history workshop just prior to the commencement of the school year in August, 1989. The group pursued the four basic questions outlined earlier relating to working context, teaching styles and dispositions, how they might understand their teaching in terms of their careers, educational and personal histories, and what, reflecting on these issues, they saw as individual agendas and priorities for their professional futures. Participants initially pursued these questions through a minimum of five hours of individual work using a self-instructional guide to life history and teaching which utilized a framework derived from our research on teachers' stories. The structure of the workshop provided opportunities for each participant to describe and discuss their stories with their functional group. Through this two-day workshop individuals and groups were able to build a deeply rooted mutual understanding of their own and their peers' teaching, describe individual agendas for professional development and identify collective agendas where they existed. Through this process they identified school-based projects for teacher development and school improvement, and the mutual trust and commitment to carry them out. Since that time all groups have met frequently on their own time to elaborate projects. Several groups have increased their size considerably. One doubled its size to include almost the whole school staff; they ran their own version of our life history seminar after school three evenings one week with excellent results in terms of building team spirit, morale, feelings of mutual support and commitment. The central office staff group have acted as substitutes for teachers so as to free them up for project activity and two new school groups have joined the project.

We think that school-based approaches to teacher development, which include collaborative autobiography, could provide a sheltered environment (Wideen, 1989) for challenging and supporting teachers in becoming self-initiated and taking risks. As well, Goodson (1989) points out, autobiography provides a way of examining teaching that is under the teacher's control, as opposed to others going directly into the classroom. As we pointed out in an earlier paper, (Butt, Raymond & Yamagishi, 1988) we need, as researchers or peers working with teachers, to use autobiography as a window through which to view the classroom. For peer-assisted activities we can then move safely into each others classrooms creating our own more desirably open collective cultures (Hargreaves, 1989a, b) with control of our own agendas (Hargreaves, 1989c).

NOTES

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